

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

FINAL COMPROMISE AMENDMENTS

**European Parliament recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the Western Balkans, in the run-up to the 2020 summit**

**Rapporteur: Tonino Picula, 2019/2210 (INI)**

**COMPROMISE 1** : AM 2 (Kyuchyuk et al/RE), AM 3 (Rapporteur)

Citation 3

- having regard to the Final Agreement for the Settlement of the Differences as described in the UN Security Council resolutions 817 (1993) and 845 (1993), the termination of the Interim Accord of 1995 and the establishment of a Strategic Partnership on 17 June 2018 between Greece and *the former Yugoslav Republic of North* (AM 2, AM 3) Macedonia, also known as the Prespa Agreement,

**COMPROMISE 2** : AM 4 (Androulakis, Papadakis/S&D), AM 5 (Kefalogiannis/EPP), AM 6 (Meimarakis et al/EPP)

Citation 11

- having regard to the ~~Presidency conclusions of the EU-Western Balkans Summit Declaration of~~ (AM 4, AM 5, AM 6) Thessaloniki ~~European Council of 19 and 20~~, of 21 (AM 4, AM 5, AM 6) June 2003, concerning the prospect of the Western ~~Balkan countries~~ *Balkans* (AM 5, AM 6) joining the European Union,

**COMPROMISE 3** :AM 7 (Fajon et al/S&D) AM 8 (Von Cramon-Taubadel/ Greens/EFA)

Citation 11 a (new)

- *having regard to the conclusions of the General Affairs Council of 29/30 April 1997 on the application of conditionality with a view to developing a coherent EU strategy for relations with the countries in the region,* (AM 7, AM 8)

**COMPROMISE 4** : AM 9 (Von Cramon-Taubadel/Greens/EFA), AM 12 (Fajon et al/S&D) AM 13 (Fotyga/ECR)

Citation 12

- having regard to the Berlin Process, launched on 28 August 2014, *in particular the declaration of the Western Balkans Foreign Ministers on regional cooperation and bilateral disputes of 27 August 2015, and the establishment of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO)*, (AM 9, AM 12) *with further summits in Vienna (2015), Paris (2016), Trieste (2017), London (2018) and Poznan (2019)* (AM 13)

**COMPROMISE 5** : AM 22 (Glavak/EPP), AM 23 (Zovko/EPP), AM 25 (Castaldo/NI), AM 26 (Piri/S&D), AM 27 (Von Cramon-Taubadel Greens/EFA), AM 28 (Fajon et al/S&D)

Recital A

A. whereas enlargement ~~has been~~ *is* (AM 26) one of the EU's most successful and *and strategic* policies (AM 25) ~~and as well as~~ (AM 25) the most effective foreign policy instrument contributing to extending the ~~area of reach of the Union's core values of respect for human dignity, freedom,~~ (AM 23, AM 27, AM 28 ) democracy, *fostering* (AM 22) peace and prosperity; *equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities across Europe;* (AM 27, AM 28)

**COMPROMISE 6** AM 62 (Gál/EPP), AM 70 (Kefalogiannis/EPP), AM 71 (Meimarakis et al/EPP), AM 73 (Danjean/EPP), AM 74 (Androulakis, Papadakis/S&D), AM 75 (Gál/EPP), AM 76 (Von Cramon-Taubadel Greens/EFA), AM 77 (Bilík/EPP), AM 78 (Fajon et al/S&D), INTA 1

Paragraph 1 - point a

a) to *support the European perspective of the Western Balkan countries and to* (AM 73) enhance the accession process by ensuring that it strengthens fundamental values *and rule of law* (AM 77) and brings sustainable democratic ~~and~~, economic *and ecological* (AM 76, AM 78) transformation and social convergence, *ensures good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation as essential elements of the enlargement and Stabilization and Association Process* (AM 62, AM 74; AM 70, AM 71) and by making sure that *enlargement of the Union continues and its enlargement run* in parallel with (AM 76) *the discussion on the future of Europe and* (AM 75) the internal reform of the EU (AM 76);

**COMPROMISE 7** AM 84 (Von Cramon-Taubadel/Greens/EFA), AM 85 (Meimarakis et al/EPP), AM 86 (Kefalogiannis/EPP), INTA 3

Paragraph 1 - point b

b) to ensure that the enhanced methodology sustains fully-fledged EU membership as the final goal and that the EU sets ~~clear and~~ *more* (AM 85, AM 86) predictable rules and criteria *based on conditionality and reversibility* (AM 85, AM 86) and applies them consistently, *making the accession process more dynamic*, (AM 86) thus restoring its credibility ~~and as a consequence by applying endorsing~~ *the revised methodology and by deciding to open accession negotiations with both Albania and North Macedonia;* (AM 84)

**COMPROMISE 8** AM 98 (Kefalogiannis/EPP), AM 99 (Meimarakis et al/EPP), AM 100 (Androulakis, Papadakis/S&D), AM 101 (Bilík, EPP), AM 102 (Loiseau et al/RE), AM 103 (Castaldo/NI)

Paragraph 1 - point d

d) to provide clear, ***transparent*** (AM 103) and consistent accession benchmarks as well as continued ***political and technical*** (AM 101) support throughout the process, and to improve the measuring of progress ***on the ground*** (AM 102), ensuring that each accession country is assessed ~~on the basis of its~~ ***based on conditionality and the principle of*** (AM 98, AM 99, AM 100) own merits;

**COMPROMISE 9** AM 107 (Von Cramon-Taubadel/Greens/EFA), AM 108 (Stanishev/S&D), AM 109 (Zovko/EPP)

Paragraph 1 - point d a (new)

d a new) ***to ensure continuity, accountability, consistency and predictability of the enlargement process by anchoring the Commission's new methodology as a long-term policy adjustment and avoiding ad-hoc revisions of the process and its parameters of accession as a consequence of political considerations of any Member State;*** (AM 107, AM 108); ***to ensure that the accession benchmarks and support are based on lessons learnt in order to avoid earlier shortcomings and to improve the accession process;*** (AM 109)

**COMPROMISE 10** AM 56 (Rapporteur), AM 104 (Kyuchyuk et al/RE)

Paragraph 1 - point d b (new)

1 d b (new) ***to accelerate the accession process of the countries committed, both politically and administratively, to the implementation of the EU related reforms;*** (AM 56, AM 104)

**COMPROMISE 11** AM 114 (Rapporteur), AM 115 (Glavak/EPP)

Paragraph 1 - point f

3

f) to increase political ***and economic*** (AM 115) incentives for the Western Balkan countries and improve coherence between the enlargement process and political ~~developments~~ ***initiatives*** (AM 114) in the EU ***via annual regional meetings in the margins of the European Council with Western Balkans leaders on an annual basis, ensuring regular participation of Western Balkans representatives in the meetings of the European Council, in Political and Security Committee as well as in Commission working groups*** (AM 114);

**COMPROMISE 12** AM 118 (Kyuchyuk et al/RE), AM 119 (Piri/S&D), AM 120 (Rapporteur), AM 121 (Bil ík/EPP), AM 122 (Deli/EPP)

Paragraph 1 - point g

g) to encourage gradual ~~participation~~ **integration** (AM 119) **of accession countries** (Rapporteur) in EU **processes**, (AM 119) sectoral policies and programmes prior to **their** accession, including ~~through~~ **via** targeted financial support **through EU funds** (AM 122), in order to bring tangible benefits for citizens, **particularly for children and young people** (AM 118, AM 120) and enhance the EU's **pre-accession** assistance and presence in these countries **prior to full-membership** (AM 121);

**COMPROMISE 13** AM 130 (Danjean/EPP), AM 131 (Deli, EPP), AM 132 (Bil ík/EPP) + Rapporteur,

Paragraph 1 - point i

i) to ~~enhance~~ **strengthen** (AM 130) the conditionality mechanism and ~~strengthen~~ **insist on** (AM 130) the reversibility of the accession process by applying objective criteria when deciding whether negotiations should be put on hold or suspended; to ensure that the Commission initiates these procedures after thorough evaluation and in response to a proposal from the Member States or the European Parliament, **while also noting that the principle of the imbalance clause and reversibility is already applicable to** (Rapporteur) **current negotiating frameworks for Serbia and Montenegro**; (AM 131) **to ensure that the conditionality and suspension** (Rapporteur) **mechanism is accompanied with by a clear communication from the EU institutions on the specifics of a possible suspension**; (AM 132)

**COMPROMISE 14** AM 158 (Kyuchyuk et al/RE), AM 160 (Zovko/EPP), AM 161 (Von Cramon-Taubadel Greens/EFA)

Paragraph 1 - point l

l) to engage the representatives of ~~accession~~ **Western Balkan** (AM 161) countries in the Conference on the Future of Europe **with a special focus on youth participation** (AM 158; AM 160);

**COMPROMISE 15** AM 167 (Kovatchev/EPP), AM 169 (Gál/EPP), AM 171 (Fajon et al/S&D), AM 172 (Von Cramon-Taubadel Greens/EFA)

Paragraph 1 - point m

m) to recognise the effects of the European Council's failure to open accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia in **June 2018, June 2019 and October 2019** (AM 171, AM 172), **which had a detrimental effect on the EU's role in the region and the public opinion concerning the EU accession**; (AM 167), **sending a negative message to candidate the Western Balkan countries** (AM 169), and to acknowledge that opening accession talks ~~would~~ restores credibility to the process, as recommended by the European Parliament **and the European Commission** (AM 171, AM 172);

**COMPROMISE 16** AM 173 (Gál/EPP), AM 179 (Stanishev/S&D), AM 180 (Meimarakis et al/EPP)

Paragraph 1 - point n

n) ~~To recognise that the sufficient completion fulfilment (Rapporteur) of the criteria in by Albania and North Macedonia needed (AM 179) to immediately open accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia both countries (AM 179) before the upcoming EU-Western Balkans Summit of Zagreb (AM 180); to consider/note that the start of initiating the opening of accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia is in the Union's very own political, security and economic interest; (AM 173)~~

**COMPROMISE 17** AM 190 (Fajon et al/S&D), AM 191 (Von Cramon-Taubadel Greens/EFA),

Paragraph 1 - point o

o) to grant visa liberalisation to Kosovo *as soon as possible* (AM 191), as the benchmarks have been fulfilled *since July 2018* (AM 190, AM 191);

**COMPROMISE 18** AM 196 (Villanueva Ruiz/GUE/NGL), AM 199 (Androulakis, Papadakis/S&D), AM 200 (Kefalogiannis, Meimarakis et al./EPP), AM 201 (Bil ik/EPP), AM 202 (Fajon et al./S&D), AM 203 (Von Cramon-Taubadel/Greens/EFA)

Paragraph 1 - point p

p) to bring the primacy of democracy, the rule of law, *human rights and fundamental freedoms* (AM196, AM 201, AM 202, AM 203) back to the very centre of the enlargement process by opening first and closing last the chapters related to the judiciary, corruption and organised crime, as well as those related to covering respect for human rights, *including minority rights* (AM 199, AM 200) ~~and~~ media freedom *and freedom of expression* (AM 201);

**COMPROMISE 19** AM 206 (Fajon et al./S&D), AM 207 (Fotyga/ECR); AM 208 (Von Cramon-Taubadel/Greens/EFA) , AM 209 (Grošelj/RE), AM 210 (Loiseau et al./RE), AM 211 (Gál/EPP), AM 212 (Fajon et al./S&D),

Paragraph 1 - point q & q a (new)

I part

q) to *enhance ownership of the enlargement process by Member States by increasing* (AM 206) the involvement of rule of law and other experts from the Member States, *civil society and human rights defenders* (AM 208; AM 212) on the ground and to improve the measurement of *the overall developments* (ed. AM 211) ~~progress in this area~~ *by continuing to adhere to the long-standing objective standards of the accession process and by avoiding politicisation of the technical aspects of the accession process* (AM 206; AM 208), *in particular drawing upon the monitoring reports and recommendations of the Council of Europe and other standard setting bodies* (AM 208)

II part

q a) new *to ensure targeted focus on state capacity building* (AM 210), *implementation of court rulings, judicial reforms* (AM 209) *and efforts to counter corruption and organised crime* (AM 207);

**COMPROMISE 20** AM 125 (Gál/EPP), AM 213 (Von Cramon-Taubadel/Greens/EFA), AM 214 (Fajon et al./S&D), AM 219 (Bil ik/EPP)

Paragraph 1 - point r a

r a) new *to take note and to* (AM 125) *facilitate the accession-related work and democracy support activities*—of the European Parliament, *including activities of ~~through~~ its standing committees and delegations [the Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committees (SAPCs)], to involve Parliament's standing rapporteurs for the Western Balkan countries in the scrutiny process and on the ground* (AM 219, AM 213, AM 214);

**COMPROMISE 21** AM 223 (Rapporteur); AM 224 (Kovachev/EPP), AM 226 (Grošelj/RE), AM 227 (Bil ik/EPP),

Paragraph 1 - point s

s) to foster electoral reforms that ensure free, fair, *competitive* (AM 227) and transparent elections *at central and local levels* AM 226) *that are free from intimidation and disinformation campaigns* (AM 224), in line with international standards, *including on transparency in party funding* (AM 224), *and recommendations of international observation missions* (AM 223); *to follow-up on the implementation of Venice Commission opinions* (AM 223); to contribute to the European Parliament's democracy support programmes in the region;

**COMPROMISE 22** AM 232 (Louiseau et al. /RE), AM 233 (Grošelj/RE), AM 234 (Fotyga/ECR), AM 235 (Rapporteur)

Paragraph 1 - point t

t) to strengthen *and closely associate* (AM 232) civil society in its role as an indispensable actor in the processes of democratic consolidation, *regional co-operation* (AM 235) and *accession-related reforms* (AM 232, AM 234), *with a focus on pro-European and pro-democratic forces in the region* (AM 233)

**COMPROMISE 23** AM 238 (Bil ik/EPP), AM 239 (Grošelj/RE)

Paragraph 1 - point u

u) to *strongly* (AM 238) condemn smear campaigns, threats and intimidation against journalists and media outlets and to insist on the investigation and prosecution of such offences, thus enabling a safe environment for journalists, while tackling the issues of concentration, *political and economic pressure on financing of media* (AM 239) and lack of transparency of media ownership;

**COMPROMISE 24** AM 242 (Piri/S&D), AM 244 (Bil ik/EPP)

Paragraph 1 - point v &va

I part

v) *to actively support and strengthen a democratic, independent and diverse media landscape* (AM 244) ~~and~~, media accountability and governance;

II part

v a) to *increase support measures fostering the resilience* (AM 242) ~~to improve resilience~~ against disinformation and disruptive media campaigns, *including the ones conducted through foreign influence operations seeking to undermine democratic processes and sovereignty of the Western Balkan countries by means of hybrid warfare* (AM 242);

**COMPROMISE 25** AM 246 (Mandl/EPP), AM 247 (Grošelj/RE), AM 267, 248 (Fajon/S&D), AM 249, 268 (Von Cramon-Taubadel/Greens/EFA)

Paragraph 1 - points w & y

I part

w) to insist on *respect* (AM 246) and ~~the~~ full implementation of *domestic and international* (AM 247) court rulings, including constitutional courts and all rulings of the European Court of Human Rights, *the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and its successor the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT), the Kosovo Specialist Chambers (SC) and Specialist Prosecutor's Office (SPO)* (AM 246), *as well as the recommendations of the Council of Europe monitoring bodies, including the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)* (AM 248; AM 249);

II part

y) to urge the Western Balkan countries to *comply with* their *international obligations* in the prosecution of war crimes and the *determination of the fate* of missing persons; to *advocate for a full cooperation with the IRMCT, the Kosovo SC and SPO and the explicit upholding of the work and the findings of the ICTY, as well as the promotion and dissemination of its work and legacy to citizens and within judicial system* (AM 267; AM 268); *to condemn all attempts to glorify war criminals and to deny historical facts, to support in this respect the RECOM initiative* (Rapporteur, 269);

**COMPROMISE 26** AM 258 (Stanishev/S&D), AM 260, 262 (Rapporteur), AM 261 (Kyuchyuk et al./RE), AM 74 (Androulakis, Papadakis/S&D)

Paragraph 1 - point x

x) to increase EU engagement in solving outstanding bilateral issues, *promoting good neighbourly relations* (AM 258, AM 74 ) *and regional co-operation through confidence-building and mediation efforts* (AM 260, 261, 262) and to urge the Western Balkan countries to commit to reconciliation and peaceful solutions to longstanding disputes;

**COMPROMISE 27** AM 273 (Kyuchyuk et al./RE), AM 274 (Gál, Deli/EPP), AM 275 (Meimarakis et al./EPP)

Paragraph 1 - point z

z) to promote and actively support the implementation of anti-discrimination policies and to insist on the prosecution of hate crimes; to encourage swifter progress towards gender equality, and in tackling discrimination and ensuring social inclusion of ethnic, *national* (AM 274, AM 275) and religious minorities, people with disabilities, Roma and LGBTQI+ people, *with special attention to children*, (AM 273) by establishing inclusive policies to protect the fundamental rights of citizens;



**COMPROMISE 28** AM 277 (Fajon et al/S&D), AM 278 (Von Cramon-Taubadel Greens/EFA), AM 279 (Fourlas, Kypouropoulos/EPP), AM 280 (Deli/EPP), AM 281 (Rapporteur)

Paragraph 1 - point aa

aa) to call for a stronger legal framework to prevent and actively to fight femicide and violence against women *and children and other forms of domestic violence* (AM 280, AM 281), *including by recalling the obligations of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence and by undertaking the necessary steps for its ratification*; (AM 277, AM 278, AM 279); *to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings*;

**COMPROMISE 29** AM 284 (Gál/EPP), AM 285 (Von Cramon-Taubadel/Greens/EFA), AM 287 (Wallace/GUE/NGL), INTA 9, INTA 10 (part I)

Paragraph 1 - point ab

ab) to put in place a strategic economic and investment plan with a view to improving competitiveness, *the legal and business environment, the situation of SMEs* (AM 284) and sustainable development (AM 287) in the accession countries; *in line with the commitments made under the Paris Agreement and with the European Green Deal* (AM 285);

**COMPROMISE 30** AM 293 (Rapporteur), AM 294 (Kyuchyuk et al/RE), AM 295 (Mandl/EPP), AM 297 (Gál, EPP),

Paragraph 1 - point ad

ad) to tackle the brain drain with concrete measures such as promoting quality and inclusive educational reforms, *especially in the area of vocational education and training (VET)*, (AM 295) ~~and so that the education sector better matches requirements in the labour market and contributes to~~ (AM 293, AM 294) the creation of *long-term and sustainable* (AM 297) job opportunities for young people;

**COMPROMISE 31** AM 298 (Bil ík/EPP), AM 299 (Fajon et al/S&D), AM 300 (Bil ík/EPP),

Paragraph 1 - point ad a (new)

ad a) *to support the regional dialogue platform “Bridging the Gap”, ~~established by~~ under the European Parliament’s Young Political Leaders Programme, in the efforts to eliminate the gap between youth policy, youth participation and Parliamentarians in the Western Balkans and to encourage concrete actions to enhance youth participation in politics and the implementation of youth-centred policies throughout the region Western Balkans* (AM 298, AM 299, AM 300)

**COMPROMISE 32** AM 291 (Piri/S&D), AM 301 (Zovko/EPP), AM 302 (Fotyga/ECR), AM 317 (Fajon et al./S&D), INTA 10 (part II)

Paragraph 1 - point ad b (new)

ad b (new) *to promote opportunities in volunteering and civic engagement for young people (AM 291) and to invest more into the region's youth ~~in the region~~ (AM 302) by increasing the participation of the accession countries in existing mobility programmes, such as Erasmus+, Creative Europe and Horizon 2020 (AM 291, AM 301, AM 302) and establishing new programmes for intraregional mobility;* (AM 291)

**COMPROMISE 33** AM 305 (Von Cramon-Taubadel/Greens/EFA), AM 306 (Furlas, Kypourou/EPP), AM 307 (Gál/EPP), AM 310 (Zovko/EPP), AM 316 (Castaldo/NI), AM 317 (Fajon et al./S&D), AM 324 (Rapporteur), AM 325 (Fotyga/ECR), INTA 11

Paragraph 1 - points ae & ae a (new)

I part

ae) to intensify assistance to the Western Balkan countries with a view to improving their environmental, **energy efficiency** (307) and climate laws and ensuring that they have the capacity to implement them in line with EU standards and *the Paris agreement* (AM 306), *including by fully and swiftly implementing their international obligations under the Energy Community Treaty* (AM; Rapporteur 324) *with regard to the full alignment and implementation of the Energy acquis of the Union* (AM 305, AM 317);

II part

a e a) new *to facilitate regional energy integration, increasing diversification and security of supply sources* (AM 324) and to *enhance connectivity of the energy infrastructures and digital networks* (AM 325, AM 317)

**COMPROMISE 34** AM 309 (Rapporteur), AM 310 (Zovko/EPP), AM 311 (Zovko/EPP), AM 317 (Fajon et al./S&D), AM 316 (Castaldo/NI), AM 313 (Von Cramon-Taubadel/Greens/EFA), AM 318 (Von Cramon-Taubadel/Greens/EFA)

Paragraph 1 - points af & ag

I part

af) to call upon authorities to take urgent measures on the monitoring, mitigation and prevention of air and water pollution, *to ensure ex ante strategic environmental assessments and environmental impact assessments to secure sustainable hydropower and tourism development, balanced with the conservation efforts* (AM 309)

II part

ag) to *encourage the necessary energy transition to cleaner (AM 310,317) renewable energy sources (AM 316) away from ~~energy production coal and lignite~~ (AM 317) causing serious social and health risks to local populations and neighbouring countries consequences in the EU and its neighbourhood*; (AM 311, 317); to include the accession *Western Balkan* (AM 313) countries in the European Green Deal and Just Transition Fund processes;

**COMPROMISE 35** AM 320 (Fotyga/ECR), AM 321 (Kovatchev/EPP), AM 322 (Gál, Deli/EPP), (INTA 8)

Paragraph 1 - point ah

ah) to ***bring the people and economies of the region and the EU closer together by*** (AM 320, AM 321) ***embedding*** the Western Balkan countries in the TEN-T ***and TEN-E*** (AM 322) network, ***and to assist in ensuring*** ~~providing~~ (AM 321) quality and safe transport ***and energy*** (AM 322) services and improving ***infrastructure and the overall*** (AM 321, AM 322) connectivity within the region, as well as between the region and the EU, ***in line with the Commission's proposal for a strategic economic and investment plan for the Western Balkans*** (AM 322);

**COMPROMISE 36** AM 327 (Kovatchev/EPP), AM 329 (Kyuchyuk et al/RE), AM 328 (Loiseau et al/RE)

Paragraph 1 - point aj

aj) to establish ***a foreseeable timetable and speed-up*** (AM 328) ***the implementation of*** (AM 327) a regional roaming-free zone and ***to initiate*** further decrease ***in*** tariffs for communications with the EU ***based on increased physical and digital regional cooperation and connectivity*** (AM 329);

**COMPROMISE 37** AM 334 (Kyuchyuk et al/RE), AM 336 (Paet/RE), AM 337 (Zovko, Gál/EPP)

Paragraph 1 - point ak a (new)

ak a new) ***to underline the significance of that the contribution of the Western Balkan countries to the protection of the European Union's external border is crucial*** (AM 337) ***and to intensify European support to border management in the region*** (AM 336, AM 337); ***to underline the need to strengthen the capacity of the asylum system in the region in cooperation with EASO and UNHCR;*** (AM 334)

**COMPROMISE 38** AM 314 Kyuchyuk et al./RE), AM 340 (Castaldo/NI), AM 339 (Loiseau/RE), INTA 6

Paragraph 1 - point al

al) to improve the consistency, efficiency, ***visibility*** (AM 340) and transparency of Union financing in the field of external action, ***thereby advancing the Union's values, the rule of law, the fight against corruption and building strong and efficient democratic institutions;*** (AM 339), ***aligning, where appropriate, the IPA III funding with the objectives of the EU Green Deal*** (AM 314)

**COMPROMISE 39** AM 343 (Danjean/EPP), AM 344 (Kokalari/EPP), AM 345 (Zovko, Gál/EPP), 346 (Gál/EPP), AM 354 (Kyuchyuk et al./RE)

Paragraph 1 - points am & am a (new)

Part I

am) to ensure adequate, fair *and proportionate* (AM 345), *performance-based* (AM 344) and results-oriented pre-accession ~~financing~~ *assistance* (AM 343) that matches the transformation needs of the beneficiaries and helps them deliver on EU accession obligations; *to prioritise specific projects benefiting the people of the countries in question* (AM 343 ) *and to enhance absorption capacity of beneficiaries* (AM 346)

Part II

a m a) new *to closer co-ordinate economic governance issues with international financial institutions (IFIs)* (AM 344) and *to improve mutual cooperation in order to streamline support efforts and avoid duplication of funding*(AM 354);

**COMPROMISE 40** AM 350 (Zovko, Gál /EPP), AM 351, AM 352 (Piri/S&D)

Paragraph 1 - point an

an) to avoid cuts in the *overall* (AM 352) IPA funding which could slow down EU-related reforms and undermine the Union's ~~strategic influence in the region~~ *capacity to fulfil its strategic objective to stabilise and transform accession countries and prepare them for membership obligations, as well as seriously limit the ability to address multiple challenges, related to the rule of law, reconciliation, regional integration and climate change, while leaving the region even more susceptible to the third country actors;* (AM 350); *to ensure an adequate and continuous support to civil society;* (AM 351)

**COMPROMISE 41** AM 355 (Zovko, Gál /EPP), AM 356 (Zovko, Gál /EPP), AM 357 (Zovko, Gál/EPP), AM 343 (Danjean/EPP), AM 358 (Castaldo/NI)

Paragraph 1 - point a (new)

Part I

ao) to ensure that IPA III is driven by political priorities that through *concrete projects* (AM 343) have a direct impact on citizens' lives (AM 343); and that pre-accession funding is allocated in a transparent, proportionate and non-discriminatory manner *and is based on solid performance indicators* (AM 358), *taking into consideration the commitment and progress of the beneficiary countries in implementing reforms;* (AM 357)

Part II

ao a) new *to reinforce the performance-based approach through a suspension mechanism, ensuring coherence with the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)* (AM 356, AM 357); *to complement the IPA III regulation with a reformed and improved "Strategic Dialogue" whereby the European Parliament is timely informed and consulted;* (AM 355)

**COMPROMISE 42** (AM 353 Zovko/Gál /EPP), (AM 359 Loiseau/RE)

Paragraph 1 - point b (new)

a o b) new *to uphold the democratic accountability by ensuring the full involvement of the European Parliament in scrutiny, oversight and strategic steering of the design, programming and monitoring and evaluation of IPA III via delegated acts;* (AM 353, AM 359)

**COMPROMISE 43** AM 362 (Zovko/EPP), AM 363 (Gál/EPP), AM 364 (Deli/EPP), AM 365 (Kyuchyuk/RE), AM 366 (Rapporteur).

Paragraph 1 - point ap

ap) to *improve* the overall visibility *and information* (AM 363) ~~of~~ *about* EU support in the region *by strengthening strategic communication and public diplomacy for conveying the values of the Union and highlighting the added value of* (AM 362) *the EU-funded projects and programmes* (AM 363); *to prepare a joint communication strategy in cooperation with the Western Balkan countries* (AM 364); *to further develop an understanding of the benefits of the accession and unification process across the European continent* (AM 366; AM 365)

**Recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the Western Balkans, in the run-up to the May 2020 Summit**

**INTA's position in the form of a letter**

**(INTA Rapporteur: Reinhard Bütikofer)**

1. Highlights that supporting EU-related reforms in the areas of democracy, rule of law, social market economy, economic cooperation and trade as well as good neighbourly relations and successfully opening, conducting and concluding accession talks with the Western Balkan countries is one of the EU's core priorities in the region; recalls that the environmental ambition of the Green Deal and the ecological transition for Europe can only be fully effective if third countries, including the EU's immediate neighbourhood also takes effective action and calls on the EU to use its influence, expertise and financial resources to mobilise Western Balkan countries to join it on a sustainable path;
2. Recalls that the EU is the main trade partner of the Western Balkan countries and that bilateral trade doubled between 2006 and 2016; notes, furthermore, that the EU continuously runs a steady and heavy trade surplus with the Western Balkans, counting for 9 billion EUR in 2018, and this surplus has continued in 2019, largely due to a pick-up in EU exports and a slow-down in EU imports, as the World Bank has also noted in its study "Rising Uncertainties";
3. Takes into account the new methodology for the accession negotiations adopted by the European Commission, which envisions the EU's enlargement policy as a two-way street on which both sides must uphold their commitments and supports the Commission in rewarding negotiation progress as well as in reopening negotiations when expected reforms are not delivered; stresses that the pace of negotiations should reflect the merits and readiness of each country and their progress with regards to internal reforms;
4. Calls on the candidate countries of the Western Balkans to fully comply with the obligations assumed under the Stabilisation and Accession Agreements (SAA) when negotiating free trade agreements; and their trade policies with third countries should be shaped in light of their future EU membership;
5. Welcomes the WTO membership applications of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia which took place respectively in 1999 and 2005; Recalls the importance of WTO membership to open up trade opportunities and to bring candidate countries closer to EU membership; calls on the EU to continue supporting and provide the necessary assistance to Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina with their WTO accession processes in order for their respective processes to be accomplished as soon as possible;
6. Calls for an increase to the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance and other funds to support reforms and assistance for remaining countries in the Western Balkans; in this regard, calls for strong integration efforts and projects, for instance from funds such as the Western Balkans Fund, in order to support Western Balkan countries in strengthening the rule of law, democracy, human rights, fight against corruption, and their administrative and judicial capacity so as to enhance economic competitiveness, prosperity and social wellbeing, budgetary balance and structural reform and to achieve stable conditions for business to operate and invest in the region; in this respect, calls on the candidate countries to deliver reforms which will step by step guarantee a rules-based economic system with a level playing field for all participants and to adopt EU standards with regard to citizen's labour and social rights;
7. Reminds the Western Balkan countries of the importance of regional economic cooperation, wider market environment and good neighbourly relations; recalls the importance of regional integration efforts coordinated within the framework of the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue, the Berlin Process, economic cooperation within CEFTA, continued work on the connectivity agenda and further engagement in the creation of the Regional Trade Area; supports initiatives that promote regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations while moving countries closer to EU membership; highlights the importance of stability and prosperity in the region as well for the EU; stresses that retaliatory trade measures and diplomatic initiatives aiming at non-recognition of a

neighbouring country handicap both the regional economic integration of the affected countries and block several lines of political dialogue;

8. Recalls that the EU is the largest foreign investor in the region by investing 12,7 billion EUR in foreign direct investments between 2014-2018; urges the European Commission to put in place a strategic economic and investment plan with a view to improving competitiveness and sustainable development in the whole Western Balkans region, as the growth in the Western Balkans is slowing down after a short-lived revival on investments in previous years and the contribution of investments and of exports to growth are fading in the region; emphasises the need to give the region high priority under the EU's Connectivity Strategy; highlights the importance of improving transport infrastructure in the region, and in particular the role this plays in facilitating trade; supports the construction of European railway and highway corridors throughout the Western Balkan countries; encourages the European Commission to expedite infrastructure investment financing;
9. Requests that the Commission provide further technical support to the Western Balkans, particularly its private sector, to improve the external investment framework, in particular in the areas of predictability and investor protection also by the means of increased financing of technical assistance through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance;
10. Reiterates its call on the Commission to monitor the effects of EU policies, including trade policy, on SMEs, as they play a vital role in international trade; due to their size and limited resources, the costs of administrative burden affects the SMEs disproportionately, therefore the EU's trade policy with the Western Balkans should be SME-friendly, providing user-friendly, up-to-date and practical information; calls on the Commission to explore increased sectoral cooperation, especially in terms of SME investment and domestic market capitalisation, of education and research, innovation and digitisation as well as environmental and green technologies, in order to share know-how and best practices; in this regard, emphasises the importance of focused youth programmes in the region in order to improve their job market situation, create decent jobs and support mobility and cyclical migration rather than irreversible economic emigration;
11. Underlines that energy industries in the Western Balkans remain defined by outdated infrastructure, the overwhelming dominance of coal and hydropower; urges the Western Balkan countries, but also foreign investors, in particular EIB, EBRD and other public financial institutions, to work to meet climate objectives and EU environmental legislation when selecting projects in the energy sector in order to reduce energy poverty, increase energy efficiency and security and pay particular attention to the preservation of biodiversity and protected sites under international conventions; calls for environmental impact assessments and public consultations on projects affecting protected areas, biodiversity and environmental protection, also taking into account local community views.